AN HEART-MELTING EXHORTATION

TOGETHER
with a Cordiall
CONSOLATION.

Presented in a Letter from *New-England*, to their dear Countreymen of *Lancaſhire*.

Which may as well concern all others in theſe ſuffering times.

By RICHARD MATHER Teacher of the Church at *Dorcheſter*, and WILLIAM TOMPSON Paſtor of the Church at *Braintry* in *New Eng'and*.

HEBREWS 3. 13. *Exhort one another daily whileſt it is called to day.*

1 THESSALONIANS. 5 14. *Comfort the feeble-minded, ſupport the weak.*

LONDON,
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232 m. 130

To all thoſe that profeſſe the name and true Religion of JESUS CHRIST in *Lancaſhire*; ſpecially to the Inhabitants of *Texteth* near *Liverpool*, of *Newton*, *Winwick*, *Eccleſton* neer *Croſton*, of *Much-Woolton*, and the places thereabouts.

Richard Mather and *William Tompſon* wiſh mercy and grace, truth and peace, from God the Father, through our Lord JESUS CHRIST.

Chriſtian Countreymen, and dear friends,

THat which the Apoſtle *Paul* profeſſeth of himſelf concerning the nation of the Jews, *that his hearts deſire and praier unto God for them was, that they might be ſaved:* Rom. 10. 1

the ſame may we profeſſe of our ſelves concerning you. And becauſe at thus many hundred and ſome thouſand miles diſtance, we cannot make known our true and great deſire after your ſalvation by word of mouth, therefore we are willing to teſtifie the ſame by a few lines in writing, humbly deſiring that for that purpoſe a word or two of Chriſtian exhortation in this way of a Letter, may not be unwelcome to any of you, but graciouſly bleſſed by the God of heaven unto you all, to thoſe good ends which we intend therein.

Indeed we could have wiſhed (had it been the will of God) that as we were born amongſt you, and for ſome years have been Preachers of the everlaſting Goſpel in your coaſts (though the weakeſt for ſuch a work,

work, and the moſt unworthy of thouſands we do acknowledge) ſo we might alſo have continued to live and to die together. For your Chriſtian communion as long as we could enjoy the ſame, whether in publike aſſemblies or private families was very dear unto us: and to this day in our conferences one with the other, we do often revive the remembrance thereof with much comfort of heart. And when the iniquity of the times was grown to ſuch an height, that amongſt others, far more eminent lights, our ſelves alſo muſt be put under a buſhell, and might not be permitted in any publike employment, to ſeek the ſalvation of your ſouls; yet God knows, and many amongſt you, we doubt not, do remember how we could not leave your Congrega-

gregations, nor depart out of your coasts, without much inward affection of heart and many tears, because you were dear unto us. And when that saying of the Apostle, *Act.* 20. 25. did come into our mindes (as it came into our mindes very often) you will scarcely beleeve how our hearts were affected at the remembrance thereof; considering with how little variation those words of his unto those *Ephesians* might be applied to our condition and yours at that time, when we did plainly perceive that most of you *amongst whom we had gone preaching the Kingdom of God, in all likelihood should see our faces no more:* which was unto us no small grief; Nevertheless though we thus speak concerning our hearty affection towards you (which

was

was and is as much as we pretend, and very cordial in Christ Jesus) yet we would not be so understood, as if we were weary of our present place and portion; For we do not remember that since our coming into this countrey (and the one of us hath been here above the space of ten years, and the other not much less then nine) that of all this time we have had one repenting thought of this transmigration of ours. True it is, we were most unwilling you may be sure to turn our backs upon our dear native countrey, and upon your selves in many respects. But those things which the wisdome and will of God had determined before, concerning our transportation into these Western parts of the world, he hath thus fulfilled: and blessed

ſed be his Name for the ſame; For whatever others ſay or think of *New-England*, we for our parts muſt both think and ſay as long as we have a day to live, that great was the goodneſſe of our God, that ever he was pleaſed to bring us hither. For conſidering what light of truth doth here plenteouſly and clearly ſhine forth, what Churches are here gathered and planted, with what liberty and purity the Ordinances of Chriſt Jeſus are here adminiſtred, by what Magiſtrates civill juſtice is here diſpenſed, and the Common-wealth governed, how holineſſe and righteouſneſſe is countenanced and encouraged, and all known impiety and iniquity proſecuted to condign puniſhment, both in Church and Common-wealth, in a word, conſidering what means

means of grace and glory are here plentifully afforded, and peaceably enjoied, we muſt therefore needs ſay, that if it be not our own fault, however it go with others, and however it hath been with us in times paſt, we may now be happy and bleſſed in Chriſt Jeſus, both in this and in another world.

And indeed we cannot but ſtand amazed at the free grace of God, and wonder with great admiration at that wiſe, and gracious, and holy diſpenſation of divine providence, whereby it comes to paſſe that ſuch unworthy ones as we be, muſt be here in a land of peace, to enjoy the many good bleſſings of God, both for earth and heaven in quiet habitations, when in the mean time it fares full ill, God knows, with the land

of

of our Nativity, and with ma-
ny thouſands therein far better
then our ſelves, whom the Lord
hath left after all their other
preſſures, under which they
have formerly groaned, now
at laſt, to ſee the moſt dolefull
daies that they have ever ſeen
in *England*, becauſe that for-
merly-flouriſhing Kingdom is
now wofully at warre within
it ſelf, and that ſore plague of
the devouring ſword (as ſore
an one as any of the four,
which are thus called by the
holy Ghoſt, *Ezek.* 14 21.)
hath already devoured much
Engliſh fleſh, and drunk much
Engliſh bloud; many hundreds
and thouſands of all ranks and
degrees, both great and ſmall,
ſince theſe warres begun, ha-
ving already loſt their lives,
and ended their daies in theſe
grievous Nationall calamities,
and

and (God knows) how many more may ſhortly do the like, becauſe for ought we can hear the wrath of the Lord is not yet turned away, but his hand is ſtretched out ſtill. In regard whereof we may take up the complaint of the Prophet, and ſay, "*Oh that our heads were* Jer. 9. 1.
"*water, and our eyes were foun-*
"*tains of tears, that we might*
"*weep day and night for the*
"*ſlain of the daughter of our*
"*people.* For indeed we deſire to bewail the ſorrows, diſtractions and diſtreſſes of that dear countrey where we were born, and wiſh we had hearts to do it more compaſſionately and effectually then theſe dull and dry ſpirits of ours can yet attain unto; though we hope it is not our diſtance for the ſpace of three thouſand miles from that land, nor our abſence from

thence

thence for the ſpace of nine or ten years, nor all the water that in all this time hath flown in this great Atlantick Ocean between *England* and us, that hath or ever ſhall waſh away the thought and remembrance of *England*, and of Gods people therein out of our hearts; but that we ſhall preferre the comfort, peace, and proſperity of it and them, before our chief joys.

And being thus minded, we hope you will give us leave out of that hearty affection and good will which we bear unto our Nation, and more abundantly to you-ward, to commend unto you our dear countreymen a few words of Chriſtian counſell and advice, concerning ſome things which we deem conducible to your eternall comfort and ſalvation, which

which we ſo heartily long after: and which advice is none other but the very ſame which we would wiſh to be given to our ſelves, if our ſoul were in your ſouls ſtead.

You have ſeen (right dearly beloved) how the great Judge of the world, and King of the Nations, by a ſore and long continuing warrre, for the ſpace of ſeven or eight and twenty years together, or thereabouts, hath been afflicting the Germane Nation for their ſinnes: and how of late time he hath brought the like judgement even to your doors, in that diſtreſſed if not deſtroied Kingdome of *Ireland*: and now you plainly ſee alſo that he will bear with *England* no longer, but they alſo muſt drink of the ſame cup of bloud, whereof others have ſo deeply

deeply drunk before. In which and other Kingdomes and countries that might be named, the diſpenſation of the Almighty is and hath been ſuch, as if he were reſolved *by "fire and by ſword to plead with*
Iſa.66.16. *"all fleſh, and that the ſlain of "the Lord ſhall be many.* And we doubt not but many of you do well know the ſaying that is written, *"That when*
Iſa.26.9. *"the judgements of God are "in the earth, the inhabitants "of the world ſhall learn righ-"teouſneſſe.* Yea truly, though his judgements were not upon our ſelves, but only upon others, yet he would have us learn righteouſneſſe thereby, or otherwiſe it will be an aggravation of our iniquity and impenitency, and a provocation of the Lords greater diſpleaſure; As it was againſt *Judah,*

dah, "When the Lord ſaw that Jer 3.8
"for all the cauſes whereby back-
"ſliding Iſrael committed adul-
"tery, and he had put her away,
"and given her a bill of divorce,
"yet her treacherous ſiſter Ju-
"dah feared not, but went and
"plaied the harlot alſo. And
Belſhazzar is ſharply reproved
and plagued by the Lord, be-
cauſe he had not learned righ-
teouſneſſe by all the judge-
ments which had befallen
Nebuchadnezzar his father,
whereof he his ſonne was not
ignorant. "*Thy father Nebu-* Dan. 5.
"*chadnezzar* (ſaith the Pro- 20,21,22.
"phet) *when his heart was*
"*lifted up, and his minde*
"*hardned in pride, was depo-*
"*ſed from his Kingly Throne,*
"*and they took his glory from*
"*him, and he was driven*
"*from the ſonnes of men, and*
"*turned out among wilde*
"*beaſts,*

" *beaſts, and thou his ſonne (O* " *Belſhazzar) haſt not humbled* " *thine heart, though thou knew-* " *eſt all this.* Whereby we ſee it is very much diſpleaſing to the Lord, and dangerous unto our ſelves, if we ſee and know the Judgements of God upon others becauſe of their ſinnes, and do not humble our ſelves, and turn from our iniquities, and fear before him that is ſo dreadfull and holy a God, and terrible, though righteous in his doings unto the ſinfull ſons of men. But if the calamities upon others ſhould thus ſtrike all our hearts with a holy fear in regard of our ſelves, how much more ought this fruit to be found in us, when the Judgements of God do fall upon our own backs? Surely at ſuch a time the Lord conſidereth what courſes he hath

taken

taken with a people for their amendment, and is not a little diſpleaſed if his corrections upon them be in vain: as you may reade at large, *Am. 4. &c.* "*I have ſent famine amongſt* "*you* (ſaith the Lord) *and* "*yet you have not turned unto* "*me: I have ſent drought a-* "*mongſt you, and yet you have* "*not turned unto me: I have* "*ſent blaſting and mildew, I* "*have ſent peſtilence amongſt* "*you, after the manner of Æ-* "*gypt, and other judgements* "*more there mentioned, and yet* "*ye have not turned unto me.* So that the Lord takes an account what corrections he hath corrected men withall, and what amendment hath been wrought thereby, and if it be otherwiſe he is very much diſpleaſed that men ſhould be ſo incorrigible, yea, in ſuch caſe

caſe the Lord will either purſue ſuch perſons and people with more and ſorer judgements, yea, "*ſeven times and* Lev. 26. 21. &c. "*ſeven times more judgements,* "*and one ſeven after another.* "*till their uncircumciſed hearts* "*be humbled*; or elſe he will utterly leave them, and give them up, as thoſe whoſe caſe is incurable, and their condition deſperate. For ſo we reade, *Iſa.* 1. 5. "*Wherefore ſhould you* "*be ſmitten any more? for ye* "*fall away more and more:* which condition is exceeding fearfull and lamentable: But by all this you may ſee that when the judgements of the Lord are in the Earth, whether upon our ſelves or others, they that ſee them, or feel them, or hear tell of them, ought to learn righteouſneſſe thereby, or otherwiſe it is like to

to be worſe for them. Sith therefore you have known the judgements of God which he hath brought upon *Germany* for many years together, and upon *Ireland* and *England* of late times: God would be very angry if you ſhould remain impenitent, unhumbled, and unreformed, though you have known all this. Wherefore (Dear friends) we beſeech you, Let our advice and counſel be acceptable to you, which yet is not our counſel but the Lords, "*That every man would* Lam. 3.4
"*now ſearch and try his waies,*
"*and turn again to the Lord.*
Let every man now call himſelf unto a ſtrict examination, for all the courſe of his life,
"*and ſmite upon his thigh, and* Jer. 8.6.
"*ſay, What have I done*; yea, & 31. 19
let every man now learn "*to* Job. 40.4
"*be vile in his own eyes, to ab-*
"*horre*

Job. 42.6. "*horre himſelf, and to repent*
"*in duſt and aſhes*; judging
himſelf before the Lord with
ſorrow and ſhame for all his a-
bominations, and pouring out
from a broken and contrite
heart, free, full and plain con-
feſſions of the ſame; yea, now
Jon. 3.8. "*let every man cry mightily*
"*unto God*, for mercy and for-
giveneſſe in the bloud of the
Redeemer Chriſt Jeſus, "*and*
"*turn to the Lord from all the*
"*evill that is in his heart or*
"*hands*, that ſo all the judge-
ments of God that are in the
Earth, may not be in vain un-
to you, and your ſinne and mi-
ſery encreaſed thereby, but
that by them your iniquity
Iſa. 27 9. may be purged, and "*this may*
"*be the ſweet and bleſſed fruit*
"*thereof, even the taking away*
"*of your ſin.*

But when the Jews were ex-
horted

horted by the Prophet *Malachy* to turn unto the Lord, with a promiſe that he would then return unto them, they made him this anſwer, "*where-* Mal.3.7.
"*in ſhould we return?* plainly declaring thereby, that they knew but little that was amiſſe in themſelves, whereof they ſhould repent, or wherein they had need to be reformed. And therefore leſt there ſhould be any ſoul amongſt you, that ſhould entertain this exhortation of ours in the like manner, and be or pretend to be ignorant whereof they ſhould repent, give us leave therefore as the Prophet muſt, "*Shew* Iſa.58.1.
"*the people their tranſgreſſions,*
"*and the houſe of Jacob their*
"*ſinnes*, and another Prophet is bidden to "*Cauſe Jeruſa-* Ezc.16.2.
"*lem to know her abominati-*
"*ons.* Give us leave (we beſeech

ſeech you) after their exam-
ple, to inſtance in ſome prin-
cipall ſinnes which were very
common in *Lancaſhire* when
we were there, and which we
fear are much continued in
that countrey unto this very
day, and therefore had need
to be repented of.

1. And firſt of all, we may
mention that generall ſinne of
prophaneneſſe or Atheiſm, and
diſreſpect of all Religion, when
multitudes of men and wo-
men from one end of the coun-
trey to another, have ſo de-
meaned themſelves, as if they
had been born for no other
end but to ſerve themſelves,
1 Joh. 2. 16. and their own luſts, "*the luſts*
"*of the fleſh, the luſts of the*
"*eye, and the pride of life*, and
ſo have ſpent their daies as if
there had been nothing elſe
for them to do, or to look af-

ter

ser, but to eat and to drink, to ſleep and to play, to build and to plant, to buy and to ſell, to marry and to give in marriage, and the like; but with as much irregiouſneſſe and prophaneneſſe of heart in all theſe things, and with as much neglect of the glory of God, and the ſalvation of their ſouls, and the means thereof, as if there had been no God to be ſerved or acknowledged, or as if themſelves had had no ſouls to be ſaved. It is but too apparent, (the Lord knows) how the glorious and holy Name of God hath been impiouſly prophaned and blaſphemed in that County by multitudes of vain and wicked Oaths, in the mouths of Gentlemen and mean men too, yea, and very children; how the holy Sabbaths of God which

he hath commanded to be ſanctified for ever, and for that end hath bid us remember the ſame, have been greatly prophaned and polluted, not only by neglect of publick and private worſhip, whereby the ſame ſhould have been ſanctified, but alſo by the contrary prophane and impious practices in ſtead thereof, ſuch as are carding, dicing, drinking, bowling, bear-baiting, ſhooting, piping, dancing at greens, ales, may-poles, and ſuch like. And when the licence for ſports and recreations upon the Sabbath, came forth from *Houghton*-Tower, (to the laſting ſhame and infamy of the place and County where ſuch an unhappy birth was brought forth) oh how gladly was the ſame entertained and embraced by multitudes of people in that Countrey,

Countrey ! and how proudly did they bear up themſelves upon the authority of the ſame, to the confronting and defiance of the faithfull Miniſters of God, that would not, nor could not conſent to ſuch prophanations, but by authority of the 4th Commandement of God did bear witneſſe againſt the ſame. It is alſo a further teſtimony of this ſpirit of prophaneneſſe that now we are ſpeaking of, that duties of Religion have been ſo exceedingly neglected in private families, children and ſervants being not at all inſtructed and catechized, yea, many families having not a Bible in them, morning and evening praier being never uſed, nor any bleſſing upon the creatures deſired of God, when men have gone unto their meals, all directly

contrary to the expreſſe word of God, *Deut.* 6.6,7. *Eph.* 6.4. 1 *Tim.* 4,4,5. and the commended examples of *David*. *Ioſhuah*, *Cornelius*, *Abraham*, and ſuch like ſervants of God. But if the ſaying of Chriſt our Saviour be true, as it cannot but be moſt true, that *they that are the children of Abraham will do the works of Abraham*, ſurely, then the neglect of family-duties (for the practice whereof *Abraham* is ſo much commended) doth teſtifie to the faces of many people that they are no children of *Abraham*, neither children of his fleſh, nor children of his faith; and whoſe children they then are you may all judge; yea, ſuch hath been the impiety of many perſons, that ſuch as have made ſome conſcience of Gods holy Name, and ſervice, and Sabbaths,

Pſal. 101. Joſh. 24. 15. Act. 10.2. Gen. 18. 19. Joh. 8.39.

baths, and have ſhewed any care to walk with God in the way that is called holy, them they have greatly hated, deſpiſed, derided, ſlandered, and other waies evill entreated and perſecuted, and all becauſe they ſeemed to be more holy then themſelves.

Wherefore to make an end of this particular, If there be any ſoul among you, whether man or woman, whether young or old, whether great or ſmall, that ſtands culpable of this prophaneneſſe and ungodlineſſe, and that is a deſpiſer and hater, or ſo much as a careleſſe neglecter of God, and the holy things of God, careleſſe of Gods word and the knowledge of it, of his Sabbaths and the ſanctifying thereof, and of the Chriſtian duties of Gods holy worſhip

in publike Aſſemblies, and in private families, yea, careleſſe of walking with God in holines for his own particular, but walks in his own luſts of ſwearing, whoredome, drunkennes, or any other. Let ſuch an one be exhorted to repent; yea, as he tendreth his own eternall comfort be earneſtly entreated to repent; yea, charged and commanded in the name of God the father, and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, to repent of all this his wickedneſſe and turn unto the Lord. For the word is gone out of Gods mouth, and ſhall not be recalled, but muſt ſtand for ever: that *without holines no man ſhall ſee the Lord*, except it be as a Judge againſt all ſuch ungodly ſinners, but never ſee God to his comfort in this or in another world. "*Oh conſider this therefore all ye that forget God, leſt he*

Heb. 12. 14.

Pſal. 50. 22.

" *he tear you in pieces, and there* " *be no deliverer:* yea, conſider it ſeriouſly and beleeve it of a truth, for the Lord hath ſpoken it, that " *neither whoremongers* Gal. 5. 20, " *nor adulterers, nor drunkards,* 21. " *nor any that walk in ſuch waies* 1 Cor. 6. " *and works of the fleſh, ſhall* 9. 10. " *have any inheritance in the* " *kingdome of God.* Be aſſured of it, for the day is coming when you will finde it moſt true, that where there is no holy knowledge of God in the minde, no change of the heart from its former prophaneneſſe and uncleanneſſe, and no purity and ſanctity of the affections and deſires, no reformation and ſanctification of the life and converſation, ſuch a man ſo continuing is moſt certainly a man of death, prepared againſt the day of ſlaughter, and ſhall immediatly drop down with-

out all hope of recovery into hell, as ſoon as death ſhall ſtrike him to the ground. Oh then whoſoever you are that reade or hear theſe words, humble your ſelves for all your iniquities, "*and turn unto the Lord, with faſting and weeping and with mourning: For he is gracious and mercifull, ſlow to anger, and of great goodneſſe, and repenteth of the evill: caſt away all your tranſgreſſions, and ſo iniquity ſhall not be your ruine, for the Lord hath ſaid and ſworn, that as he liveth he taketh no pleaſure in the death of the wicked, but rather that he turn from his way and live; turn you, turn you, wherefore will you die?* The very Angels of heaven will be glad at the day of your converſion. But if you harden your hearts, and refuſe

Joel. 2. 12, 13. Ezec. 18, 30. Ezek. 33. 11.

to

to hearken to the gracious call of the Lord, your damnation is juſt, your bloud will be upon your own heads: you have been warned and warned again and again, by many worthy Miniſters and meſſengers of God, that have preached in your Congregations; and amongſt others you have been warned heretofore by us in preaching, and now by us in writing.

But beſides this ſinne of prophaneneſſe and open ungodlineſſe, there is another evill no leſſe dangerous, which is often found amongſt them that profeſſe more purity and reformation of life, and that is, when men bleſſe themſelves in their own righteouſneſſe, and think their condition ſafe and good, meerly becauſe of ſome legall reformation, without 2.

any feeling of their need of Chriſt, any high prizing of him, any earneſt longing for him, any true relying or reſting on him. That it is incident to profeſſors to offend in this kinde, is plain, by that which is written of the Phariſees, "*that they truſted in* "*themſelves, that they were* "*righteous, and deſpiſed others,*
Luk. 18. 9, 10, 11, 12. and accordingly one of them is brought in boaſting of himſelf before God, that he was not like other men, he was no extortioner, no adulterer, no unjuſt perſon, nor like that Publican, but he faſted twice a week; he gave tithes of all that he poſſeſſed, and the like. And it is ſaid of the nation of
Rom. 10 3 the Jews generally, that "*they* "*being ignorant of the righte-* "*ouſneſſe of God, and going a-* "*bout to eſtabliſh their own righ-* "*teouſneſſe, did not ſubject them-* "*ſelves*

"ſelves to the righteouſneſſe of "God. Which place doth alſo ſhew the dangerous condition of all ſuch juſtitiaries in this reſpect, that being ſo full of their own righteouſneſſe, they ſubmit not themſelves to the righteouſneſſe of God, nor unto Chriſt Jeſus *who is the end of the Law, for righteouſneſſe to every one that believes.* But of this you may be ſure, that whatever a mans righteouſneſs may be, unleſſe he were one that had never ſinned, he hath nothing in him that is of any worth for the preſent juſtification of his perſon, nor for the everlaſting ſalvation of his ſoul. For the text is plain, that "*in Gods ſight there is no* "*fleſh living that can be juſtifi-* "*ed.* Pſal. 143. 2. And therefore ſuch holy men as *David, Daniel, Nehemiah, Paul,* and others,

others, durſt not ſtand to be tried and juſtified that way (*Pſal.*143. 2. *Dan.*9. 18. *Neh.* 13. 22. *Phil.* 3. 9.) but have been glad to fly for this matter only to the free mercy and grace of God, and the righteouſneſſe of Chriſt Jeſus which is by faith, and you will finde that it will be beſt for you to do the like.

It may be you will ſay, We have no need to be told of this, for we are not Papiſts to hold juſtification by works, but do beleeve that juſtification is by faith only without the works of the Law. Nevertheleſſe we cannot think it needleſſe for men to be put in minde of this matter, I partly becauſe there are many (the Lord knows) in that dear countrey of ours, who diſcover themſelves to be deeply

tainted

tainted with this as well as other points of Popery; and partly becauſe this Popery, this pride and ſelf-love is naturall to all the ſons of men, being a part of that originall ſinne which is common to all as well as to thoſe that make direct profeſſion of popery; and therefore your ſelves, unleſſe you were free from all originall corruption, are in danger of this relying upon ſelf-righteouſneſſe as well as Papiſts; nay we fear (be it ſpoken without offence) that there are ſundry amongſt you that do ſo rely indeed, and though they be not outwardly culpable in reſpect of popery and prophaneneſſe, but profeſſe a ſtricter and purer way, yet in very truth are in no better condition to Godward then others are, as being

ing utterly without part and portion in Chriſt Jeſus. For the manifeſting whereof, we hope you will eaſily grant, that whoever hath no more religion in him, but what might have been attained if Chriſt had never been, ſuch an one, whatever relgion he may ſeem to have, is certainly without Chriſt, and in a ſtate of death unto this day. And that ſo it is with many profeſſors may appear by this; that trouble of conſcience for ſinne, and reformation of life, after that troubler is all the religion that is found in many profeſſors; for let a man attain to theſe two, to be ſtung in conſcience for his ſinne, and afterwards to take up a ſtricter courſe of life in the practice of good duties, as prajer in

his

his family, frequenting of Sermons, converſing with Chriſtians, and ſuch like: and how many are there that hereupon would account themſelves and be accounted by others to be right good Chriſtians, and in a moſt bleſſed condition? Whenas the truth is, all that is here mentioned, is no more then might be wrought by the Law though Chriſt Jeſus had never come into the world. For a ſerious conſideration of the curſes of the Law being threatned might produce the one, and the ſerious conſideration of the duties of the Law being preſſed & urged might produce the other; but both the one and the other without Chriſt, and conſequently both the one and the other without ſalvation, ſith there is no ſalvation without Chriſt.

Wherefore (dear friends)

in

in the bowels of Jeſus Chriſt we do beſeech you, examine your ſelves whether it be thus with you or with any of you; ask your ſelves this Queſtion, whether any Evangelicall and ſaving work of grace and faith in Chriſt be yet wrought in your ſouls; or whether all that yet you have had experience of, doe amount to no more but legall affrightment and legall amendment? And if upon examination, any ſoul amongſt you ſhall finde his condition to be no better then this that here we are ſpeaking of, in the name of God, let ſuch a ſoul be deeply humbled and repent in duſt and aſhes, for this amongſt all his other ſinnes, that he hath prized Chriſt no more, thinking himſelf to be rich and encreaſed

in goods, and to have need of nothing, because of legall duties and common graces, not knowing how through want of Christ Jesus in his soul, he hath all this while been "*miserable, and wretched, and* "*blinde, and poor, and naked.* And let a man consider with himself, (and the Lord grant that he may consider it seriously) that it is not all this humiliation and reformation that can make satisfaction to the justice of God for any one, though but the least of all his manifold transgressions, nor justifie his person in the sight of God; and therefore if he die in this condition, (which God forbid) he will certainly die accursed, and notwithstanding all his glorious profession of religion, his good estimation amongst others,

thers, or the good opinion that he hath or hath had of himſelf, he will at death everlaſtingly periſh from the glorious and ſaving preſence of God; becauſe it is a moſt infallible and divine truth that muſt ſtand for ever, and all fleſh ſhall finde it ſo; that "*he that hath the Sonne hath* "*life, and he that hath not* "*the Sonne hath not life*, 1 Joh. 5. 12. It were therefore much to be deſired, that there were in men ſuch an heart as was in the Apoſtle *Paul*, who having many legall priviledges, and having been zealous of legall duties, ſo that "*in re-*"*ſpect of the righteouſneſſe of* "*the Law he was blameleſſe, yet* "*counted all theſe things loſſe* "*for Chriſts ſake, for whom he* "*ſuffered the loſſe of all, and* "*did judge them to be dung that*

"*he*

" *he might winne Christ, and*
" *might be found in him, not*
" *having his own righteousnesse*
" *which is of the Law, but that*
" *which is by the faith of Christ,*
" *even the righteousnesse which*
" *is of God by faith.* Phil. 3. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9. An excellent lesson, and worthy to be learned by every Christian, yea, a lesson that must be learned in some measnre of truth by all those that must be saved; For Christ himself prescribes it as the first particular to him that would be his disciple, that " *he must deny himself*, Mat. 16. 24. And by a mans self that must be denyed, he means this self-righteousnesse as well as other things. For sure it is, that if ever a man must be saved he must be saved by Christ, " *because there is not* " *salvation in any other.* Act. 4. 12.

4.12. and if by Chriſt, then a man muſt beleeve in Chriſt for without faith a man can have no union nor communion with Chriſt "*nor ever pleaſe* "*God.* Eph. 3. 17. Heb. 11. 6. And if a man have faith in Chriſt, then Chriſt muſt be precious in his ſight, for unto them that have faith *he is precious.* 1 Pet. 2. 6. And if Chriſt be precous in any mans ſight then he muſt loath himſelf in his own ſight, and not only caſt away all the practice of wickedneſſe, but all truſt and confidence in the "*filthy rags* "*of his own righteouſneſſe,* Iſa. 64. 6. that ſo "*ſelling all that* "*ever he hath, he may buy that* "*moſt precious Pearl, the Lord* "*Jeſus Chriſt,* and his righteouſneſſe, *Matth.* 13. 45. A Pearl of ſuch ineſtimable worth and value, that he is moſt

moſt unſpeakably happy that hath it, and of ſuch abſolute neceſſity, that they are moſt wretched and accurſed who live and die without it.

Laſtly, to name no more particulars, This is another, and not the leaſt of the ſinnes for which our Countreymen ſhould be humbled and repent in the ſight of God, *viz.* that the authority and will of Chriſt Jeſus in Church-adminiſtrations, hath been no more acknowledged and regarded. For ſith he is the only King and Lord and Lawgiver to his Church, *Pſal.* 2. 6. Jam. 4. 12. therefore his Church, and all things in his Church ought to be eſtabliſhed and ordered according unto his appointment, or if it be otherwiſe, his royall authority is injured thereby. Now

if

if his appointment in these matters were obſerved, then Churches for the quality of their matter ſhould conſiſt of none but Saints, and viſible beleevers. *Iſa.* 60.21. *Ezek.* 44. 7, 9. *Zach.* 14. ult. *Epheſ.* 1.1. and for the quantity thereof, no greater number but one Congregation. 1 Cor. 14. 23. Then functions and offices of miniſtery which are not from heaven, but from men, *Mat.* 21. 25. ſhould not be tolerated in his Church, nor any of thoſe functions and offices be wanting which the Lord Jeſus hath appointed and ordained. *Eph.* 4.11. *Phil.* 1.1. 1 *Tim.* 5. 17. Then none ſhould be choſen or received unto any office in the Church, but ſuch as are qualified with gifts for their places. 1 *Tim.* 3.2,3. *&c.* nor ſhould their entrance into

to

to their places be without the choice and free conſent of the Church, *Act.* 1. 23. & 6. 3, 5. & 14. 23. and when they are entred, they ſhould execute their places with all diligence and faithfullneſſe. 1 *Cor.* 4. 1. 1 *Tim.* 5. 17. and the worſhip which in theſe Churches ſhould be performed, ſhould not be by the precepts and canons of men, but according to the will and word of God, with diſcipline adminiſtred according to the rule of Chriſt: *Mat.* 18. 15, 16, 17. In all which particulars (the Lord knows) there hath been great ſwerving from the appointment of Chriſt, both in your Countrey, and in other places of *England*: in that prophane and vile men have been allowed for members of the Church, and the ſigns and ſeals

ſeals of the body and bloud of Chriſt prophanely adminiſtred to ſuch whom the Scripture calleth *dogges and ſwine*, Matth 7.6. Alſo, in that beſides the Congregationall Church appointed by Chriſt, there have been Dioceſan and Provinciall Churches, which he appointed not, and Arch-Biſhops, Lord-Biſhops, Deans, Chancellors, and many more functions and offices in the Church, which were all invented and deviſed by men; and Paſtors, Teachers, Elders, and Deacons, which he himſelf appointed, greatly neglected and out of uſe. Many have been admitted to the miniſtery, which have been altogether unfit for any ſuch weighty and ſacred emploiments, and obtruded upon the Congregations by Patrons and Prelates, and

and when they have been in their places, have been moſt negligent and unfaithfull therein, not minding the glory of God, nor the ſalvation of the peoples ſouls; and Eccleſiaſticall Diſcipline hath been adminiſtred by Officers and Laws, and Canons and Courts, and worſhip performed by Service-book and Ceremonies, in many particulars: of all which it may be truly ſaid, *they are things which the Lord never commanded, nor did they ever come into his heart*, as Jer. 7.31.

But here it may be ſome man may ſay, If things have been amiſſe in theſe particulars, what is that to us? we hope it is not our fault. Such an one we would pray to conſider that in many particulars the people have been willing enough, yea, too willing of theſe corruptions that have been invented and impoſed by *Object.* *Anſw.*

others; as "*when the Prophets* "*propheſied falſly, and the Prieſts* "*did bear rule by their means,* "*and the people loved to have it ſo.* Jer.5.31. And where it hath been ſo that the people have been willing of theſe corruptions, there the people have reaſon to be humbled for them, though the things were firſt invented and impoſed by others. But ſay it had been againſt their mindes that ſuch corruptions have been practiſed, yet it ſhould greatly grieve a godly heart to ſee ſuch injury done to Chriſt Jeſus, as that other laws beſides his, and *other Lords beſides him ſhould have dominion over the people of God.* Iſa.26.13. and ſuch injury done unto the Church of Chriſt, as that by means of theſe uſurpations and impoſitions of men, ſhe ſhould be bereaved of a great part of that ſpirituall liberty which

which was purchaſed for her by the price of his precious bloud; and laſtly, it ſhould grieve every Chriſtian heart, in regard that many a ſoul (God knows) hath been endangered to everlaſting perdition, as by the reſt of the corruptions fore-mentioned, ſo eſpecially by that dumb and unfaithfull Miniſtery which hath been ſet over many a Congregation, the Lord having ſaid that "*where* "*viſion fails, there the people* "*periſh; and if the blinde leade* "*the blinde, both muſt fall into* "*the ditch*, Pro. 29.18. Mat. 15. 14.

Unleſſe therefore you will ſay (which we hope you doe abhorre to think) that though the corruptions brought in by the Prelacy and Hierarchy, have been the deſtruction of the ſouls of thouſands, and

have been moſt injurious to Chriſt Jeſus your Lord and ours, and to his Church which he ſo dearly bought, yet all this is nothing to you, you have no reaſon to be affected with theſe things, unleſſe (we ſay) you will thus carelelly paſſe over theſe matters of this high concernment and importance, we know not how you can ſatisfie your conſciences in the ſight of God, without a ſerious and deep lamenting and bewailing of the fore-mentioned corruptions in Church-adminiſtrations, as well as any other iniquities of the land. For ſure it is, many have heretofore been deeply guilty of ſinne in theſe things, and our dear Countrey of *Lancaſhire* hath had her part in this guilt as well as other places; yea, and our ſelves (the Lord be mercifull to us in regard-

gard of this and the reſt of our ſins) have not been free when we lived amongſt you from a great deal of ignorance and guilt in this kinde. In regard whereof we are now the more deſirous to provoke our ſelves and our Chriſtian acquaintance and friends to a ſerious repentance for theſe things; willing alſo by this means if it were the will of God to make ſome ſupply of our defectiveneſſe in exhortations of this kinde in times paſt, when (as we muſt needs acknowledge) we fell a great deal ſhort of duty herein; but being now and long ago convinced of the evil of the things afore-mentioned, we think it our duty both to lay the ſame deeply to heart, and to provoke our acquaintance to do the like. Wherefore we beſeech you, let it not ſeem a

ſmall thing unto any of you, that there have been ſuch corruptions in the houſe of God, and the adminiſtrations therein. But let every ſoul ſeriouſly learn to be aſhamed in the ſight of God, that men have "*ſet* "*their poſts by Gods poſts, and* "*their threſholds by Gods threſ-* "*holds.* Eze.43.8. that is to ſay, their own inventions by Gods inſtitutions. And if men be once aſhamed of theſe things as well as of other their ſins, then the Lord hath promiſed in this Scripture, *Eze.*43.11. "*to ſhew* "*them the pattern of his houſe,* "*the goings out thereof, and the* "*comings in thereof, and all the* "*Laws and Ordinances thereof.* But there is no hope that men ſhould ever come to ſee the beauty and comely order of a pure Church, and the holy things of God therein, unleſſe they

they be humbled and aſhamed of their own iniquities and abominations, as in other things, ſo alſo in this particular of mixing the devices of men with the holy inſtitutions of God, which we heartily wiſh all the ſervants of God ſeriouſly to conſider and to lay to heart.

Nevertheleſſe, we doe acknowledge that your condition ſtands in need of conſolation as well as exhortation, though we thus ſpeak; For we have heard of ſad and doleful things that have befallen that Countrey as well as other parts of the Kingdom, by means of the bloudy diſtempers of warre wherewith the Lord hath afflicted the land. It hath been reported to us by printed Currantoes and by letters, that many bloudy battels have been

fought in your coaſts, that ma-
ny of your Towns have been
beſieged and taken, many hou-
ſes in *Lancaſter* and elſewhere
burnt to the ground, many men
robbed and plundered of their
eſtates, many fain to fly from
their houſes and habitations
for fear of the enemy, and glad
to wander they and theirs for
ſuccour and relief where they
could finde the ſame amongſt
ſtrangers, that much bloud hath
been ſhed at the battel at
Houghton Common, at the ta-
king of *Liverpool*, of *Bolton*,
and other places in the Coun-
trey, and ſuch as have eſcaped
with life have been forced to
endure and undergoe much
hardſhip and miſery, though
their lives have been given
them for a prey. In regard of
all which we confeſs you have
need of cordials and comforts,
and

and oh that we had the skill to miniſter the ſame unto you in ſuch ſort as might be for the refreſhing of your diſconſolate hearts. But the beſt is, *he that counts the Wandrings of his people, and putteth all their tears into his bottle*, he is able to comfort the comfortleſſe among you, that have ſuffered for his ſake, and will effectually do it in due time. In the mean ſeaſon be entreated (dear Brethren, all you children of affliction) to ſtay your hearts a little from ſorrow, and refrain your voice from weeping and your eyes from tears, while we propound to your conſideration ſuch grounds of conſolation as we finde in the bleſſed book of the Scriptures of God, and which have been ſanctified and bleſſed unto us through his grace, for the bringing of our

hearts to ſome meaſure of qui-
et contentation and comfort in
the ſaddeſt hours of affliction
that have befallen us in the
paſſages of our pilgrimage,
from our firſt times until this
day. Which grounds of conſo-
lation we truſt the Lord may
be graciouſly pleaſed to bleſſe
in like ſort unto your ſouls

Firſt of all, All our afflictions
in this world do not happen by
chance, or meerly by the will
of devils or men, but they are
all ſuch as our heavenly father
hath appointed us unto; and
as our Saviour ſometimes ſaid
"*Shall we not of the cup that our*
"*Father hath mixed for us?*
Joh. 18. 11.

2. He that ſometimes ſaid,
"*I have ſeen, I have ſeen the af-*
"*fliction of my people that is in*
"*Egypt*, Exod. 3. 7. he is ſtill
the ſame allſeeing and allſuffici-
ent

ent God, and ſo beholds and obſerves all the ſufferings of his ſervants, and all the injurious and outragious dealings of their enemies, *Pſa.*10.14 17.

3. Nor doth he only ſee our ſufferings and no more but ſo, but alſo (ſuch is his goodneſſe) he doth ſympathiſe with us in the ſame: ſo that our Lord and Redeemer in all our afflictions is afflicted with us, and accounts our ſufferings as his own. *Iſa.*63.9. *Zach.*2.8. *Act.*9. 4,5. *Col.*1.24.

4 Our heavenly father like a good Phyſitian doth never afflict his children willingly nor giveth them bitter potions to drink, but as it were by conſtraint and being neceſſitated thereunto, when they in regard of ſome ſpirituall diſtemper or corruption doe ſtand in need thereof. *Lam.*3.27. 1 *Pet.*1.6.

5. And

5. And to ſhew how unwilling he is of the ſorrows of his ſervants, he ſaith he is angry but a little againſt them, but for their enemies that are ſo fierce and handle his ſervants ſo ſeverely, he profeſſeth to be ſore diſpleaſed with them for this dealing of theirs, and for their eager minde to help forward their affliction, which he counts a going beyond their Commiſſion. *Zach.* 1.15.

6. The power of the malignant enemies of Gods ſervants is ſo limited by the Lord, that not the moſt malicious of men, nor yet any of all the devils in hell can go one jot beyond his leave and commiſſion, who as he hath ſet bounds to the ſea, ſaying "*thus far ſhalt* "*thou go, but no further, and* "*here ſhall ſtay thy proud waves.* Job.38.11. Even ſo in like ſort doth

doth he reſtrain the rage and tumult of the wicked againſt his ſervants. *Pſa* 65.7.

7. The afflictions of the godly are alwaies ſo ordered by the Lord, that for meaſure they ſhall not be immoderate, *nor more then they are able to bear*, Jerem.30.11. 1 Cor.10 13. nor ſhall they in the iſſue do them any hurt, but great good, both in purging out their ſinne and corruption *that they may be partakers of his holineſſe*, Heb.12.10. Iſa.1.25. Joh.15 2. *and in conforming them to Chriſt*, Rom.8.29. and to the bleſſed Prophets, Apoſtles and Martyrs that have been before them.

8. The Lord doth not love his children ever a whit the leſſe becauſe they are afflicted, *Heb.* 12.6,7. *Rev.*3.19. but on the contrary is many times then neareſt unto you, when they are

are in greateſt tribulation, and then affords unto them the moſt of his gracious preſence, the moſt mighty ſupport, moſt rich ſupply of patience and long-ſufferance and other graces, and the ſweeteſt glimpſes and apprehenſions of heavenly glory, with the moſt lively expectations of future bleſſedneſſe, 2 *Cor.* 1.5. & 4.16. God was never nearer to the three Princes, *Dan.*3. then when they were in the furnace, nor to *Daniel* and *Ezechiel*, and *John* in glorious viſion of God, then when they were in captivity and baniſhment, nor unto *Steven*, then when the ſtones came thickeſt about his head.

9. This is the common way in which all have gone that have gone to heaven, and why ſhould we expect to be ſingularly priviledged above all the reſt.

reſt of the Saints, and not rather be content to bear theſe things with patience, "*the ſame* "*afflictions being accompliſhed in* "*our brethren that are in the* "*world*, 1 Pet 5 9.

10. All the ſufferings of this life are but for a moment, for yet a little while, and *he that ſhall come* to work our perfect deliverance, *he will ſurely come, and will not tarry*, 2 Cor. 4. 17. Heb. 10. 37. And ſure it is, that if our lives were the longeſt that ever any were, and that of all this time we ſhould never ſee good day, yet all this in reſpect of eternity were ſuch a nothing, that that eternall weight of glory will abundantly recompenſe us for the ſame. *Rom.* 8. 18.

Theſe and ſuch like Arguments of conſolation againſt all the ſufferings of the Saints in

in this world, we doubt not but many amongſt you have been long ago taught of God to conſider. Nevertheleſſe our unfeigned love to your ſouls hath moved us in this manner to revive the remembrance of them at this time, though you doe already know them, and be eſtabliſhed in the preſent truth.

And beſides theſe conſiderations afore-mentioned, which are more generall, and applicable to all afflictions and troubles, whatſoever the Saints may be exerciſed withall in this life; there are ſundry things in the ground and cauſe of your preſent ſufferings, as alſo in reſpect of the condition of your enemies by whom you ſuffer, that may alſo be grounds of conſolation to every ſincere and Chriſtian heart.

As firſt of all, becauſe the war

war wherein you have been engaged, and by means whereof you have ſuffered ſo great things, was not (as we conceive) offenſive and voluntary, but meerly defenſive and taken up upon neceſſity, becauſe otherwiſe it could not have been avoided, but your eſtates, your wives, your children, your liberty, your laws, yea, your very lives, and (that which ought to be dearer then your lives) the true Religion of Chriſt Jeſus, theſe muſt all have been proſtituted to the pleaſure of Papiſts and other prophane and impious people, the ſworn ſervants of Antichriſt, and bloudy enemies of God and of the Kingdome; And therefore if *Nehemiah* ſpake to good purpoſe when he bad the rulers and people of *Judah* "*to* "*remember the Lord which is*

"*great*

" *great and terrible, and to fight*
" *for their brethren, their ſonnes*
" *and their daughters, their*
" *wives and their houſes*, Neh. 4.14 your ſelves we doubt not may have comfort in your fightings, whatever you may hazard or looſe therein, becauſe you have as many relations and intereſts to fight for, and of as precious importance and concernment as any that *Nehemiah* doth there mention, and ſome of a great deal more, ſo that if any ask why you would engage your ſelves in this war, the events whereof have been to many ſo ſad, ſuch may ſatisfie themſelves if they will but conſider what matters you had lying as it were at ſtake: and you may well anſwer in the words of *David* for the ſatisfaction of your own and others conſciences, " *Was there not*

a cauſe? 1 Sam.17.29.

2. And doubtleſs it is a great comfort in ſufferings when they that ſuffer can ſay unto God, *for thy ſake O God theſe things are come upon us*; In which eaſe the Church *Pſal.*44. 22. doth greatly comfort themſelves, and our Saviour in this reſpect doth comfort his diſciples, both pronouncing them to be bleſſed when they ſo ſuffer, and commanding them thereupon *to rejoice and to be exceeding glad*, Matth. 5.11,12. Now inaſmuch as your ſufferings are ſufferings for that doctrine, that worſhip and that government of the Church, which is preſcribed in the Scripture, againſt Popery and Prelacy and other corrupt inventions of men, we therefore doe eſteem the cauſe of them to be no other but the very cauſe of God, Pſa.44.22

God, and of his Chriſt: and ſo you may well claim a ſhare in thoſe conſolations which belong to thoſe who ſuffer for the cauſe of God and for righteouſneſſe ſake.

3. Nor is that nothing which is ſo often mentioned in the Scripture, that the bloud of Gods ſervants *doth cry for vengeance* againſt their enemies, *Gen.* 4.10. *Rev.* 6.10. In which reſpect you may be aſſured that he that ſaith *the death of the Saints is precious in his ſight*, Pſal. 116.15. will not ſuffer the bloud which you or yours have ſhed or ſhall ſhed for his cauſe (the cauſe you have now in hand) to be alwaies unrevenged, but will ſurely finde a time to render tribulation to them that trouble you in his waies, 2 *Theſ.* 1.6. For their tumult and outrage and blaſphemy

my is already come up into his ears, *Isa.*37.29. so that he will doubtlesse *avenge your cause, yea, and avenge it speedily*, Luk. 18.7,8.

4. Your brethrens bloud that is already poured out in this cause, you cannot tell how much good it may have done, and will doe, nor what good your selves may doe by your constancy. But this you know how the Apostle saith, *the things that were done to him, did turn to the furtherance of the Gospel.* Phil.1.12. and the old saying, that the bloud of Martyrs hath been the seed of the Church, hath been abundantly verified in our land, and in *Lancashire*, as well as in other parts. For who knows not what a multitude of professors have been brought forth in the Kingdom and in our County by means of the

the ſufferings of the Martyrs in. Queen *Maries* daies? Was not bleſſed *Bradford* born in *Manchester*? and *George Marſh* in the Pariſh of *Dean* near *Bolton*? and *Jeffery Hurſt* in *Leigh*? and doth not he that knows theſe places well know, that profeſſion of the truth, and power of godlineſſe hath abounded in theſe and the places thereabouts, much more then in many other places? And why may we not look at this as one part of the precious fruit of the ſuffering of the Saints afore-mentioned, who received their birth and firſt being in thoſe places? And if we ſhould mention reverend *Bourn*, wiſe *Go'nall* grave *Midgeley*, both the father and the ſonne, and ſhould ſay that *Manchester* hath not fared the worſe for the firſt, nor *Bolton* for the ſecond, nor

Rach-

Rachdale and *Leigh* for the two laſt, we ſhould not be vain in ſo ſaying. For we think it is clear that where theſe or other of the Lords Prophets have ſuffered any thing for his ſake, and in any meaſure of truth have ſtood up for reformation, there God hath bleſſed the Countrey round about, ſo that there hath not any where been found more profeſſion and power of Religion then in thoſe parts. And if your own preſent ſufferings may produce the like effect (as why may it not?) we truſt you will not ſo much ſorrow for the bitterneſſe of the things you ſuffer, as rejoice and be glad for the happy and ſweet fruit thereof.

5. *Rome* is now ready to be ruined, and the time of her deſtruction now poſteth on apace,

apace. For the beaſt now receiving a wound and deadly blow in the downfall of the Prelacy and other corruptions depending thereon, doth therefore thus lay about him and beſtirre himſelf in killing the ſervants of Jeſus, *Rev.* 11.7. as it hath been the manner of Satan *to ſhew forth the greateſt wrath, when he knows he hath the ſhorteſt time*, Revel. 12.12. Therefore (dear brethren) be patient for a while, a very little while, for it will not be long afore the ſtorm be over, and then we ſhall have glorious daies: For *Babylon* being once fallen whoſe fall is not farre off, new *Jeruſalem* will then come down from heaven as a Bride prepared for her husband. *Rev.* 19.7. Which times you may be aſſured will be very glorious: for the report and

viſion

viſion of them was ſo joyfull to *Iohn*, that tranſported therewith he could not contain himſelf, but fals down to worſhip the Angel that revealed unto him theſe things. *Rev.*19,10. & 22. 9. which though it was his infirmity, yet it argueth the great felicity of thoſe times, the tidings whereof did ſo tranſport the ſpirit of ſo great and holy an Apoſtle.

6. But though the time of your ſufferings ſhall be but ſhort, yet your recompence for the ſame ſhall be laſting and large. For though neither you nor your children ſhould live to ſee the happy daies that are a coming and drawing on, but that you ſhould be taken away in the battel, whileſt you are fighting for and with the Lamb againſt the beaſt and his adherents, yet of this you may be

aſſured that ſo many of you (and we hope they are not a few) as have known the Lord Jeſus in truth and in ſincerity, ſhall no ſooner end your daies in this world, but you ſhall be taken away to heaven, to the fruition of eternall reſt and peace, where you ſhall experimentally finde it made good unto your ſouls, *that your light affliction which is but for a moment, will work for you a farre more exceeding and eternall weight of glory*, 2 Cor.4.17. And in the mean time, if God continue your lives, he is able (the earth being his and the fulneſſe thereof, *Pſa.*24.1.) to give you an abundant recompence even in outward matters, for all the loſſes that you have or may ſuſtain for his name, 2 *Chro.*25.9. However, that ſame hundredfold in ſpirituall and internall bleſſings

bleſſings, which our Saviour hath promiſed in ſuch caſe, *Mar.* 10. 30. that ſame you ſhall be ſure to receive in this life, beſides eternal life in the world to come. And for your children or friends that have already loſt their lives in this cauſe, or may loſe the ſame hereafter, he would have you beſides other conſiderations to be comforted in this, that you ſhall ſee them again at the latter day, when you and they ſhall for ever be with the Lord.

Wherefore to draw to an end, ſith your war wherein you have been engaged and wherein you have ſuffered ſuch things, hath been meerly defenſive and neceſſary, becauſe you could not avoid it, and ſith the cauſe for which you contend is not your own, but the cauſe of Jeſus Chriſt, ſith your ſufferings

are ſo precious in the ſight of God, that he will ſurely take vengeance on your enemies, ſith your preſent preſſures and troubles and conſtancy therein may be profitable to poſterity many a day hereafter, and that the time of your ſufferings muſt be but ſhort, and then be followed with happy times that will enſue in this world, and afterwards be rewarded with eternall glory in another: We beſeech you therefore dear Brethren and friends, put away now all baſe and unworthy ſorrows and fears, and quit your ſelves valiantly like men, and be ſtrong, *lift up the hands that hang down, and the feeble knees. In nothing fear your adverſaries, which is unto them a token of perdition, and to you of ſalvation, and that of God; but ſanctifie the Lord of hoſts himſelf, and let him*

1 Cor. 16. 13.
Heb. 12. 12
Phil. 1. 28

be

be your fear, and let him be your Isa. 8. 13.
dread. If you have been plundered and robbed of your eſtates or a great part thereof, you know the Chriſtian Hebrews took ſuch things not only patiently but alſo joyfully, *knowing that they had in heaven* Heb. 10. *a better and an enduring ſubſtance:* and your ſelves ſhall do well to be like minded to them therein. If you have loſt your dear friends in theſe broyls and battels wherewith the kingdom and your Countrey hath been embroiled: if any woman have loſt her dear husband, any husband his dear wife, any father his childe, any childe his father, any friend or brother his brother or friend; Conſider whether you could ever looſe them in a better quarell, or for a better cauſe: Chriſt Jeſus and his Goſpel and Ordinances are ſure

better then a thouſand, either husbands or wives, either fathers, or children, or other friends: and he knows but little the worth of Chriſt and of the things of Chriſt, that doth not eſteem them ten thouſand times better then all the world beſides: and indeed as our Saviour ſaith, *He that loves theſe things better then him, is not worthy of him.* If you ſhould be ſtripped of your eſtates and friends, and afterwards of your lives alſo, you know our dear Saviour laid down his life for you, and therefore it is but equall, if you give all that is dear unto you, and even your very lives for him. If you loſe any thing for him and his cauſe, you ſhall be no loſers in the end, but by that time all accounts are caſt up, you ſhall finde you have *an hundred-fold for*

for all your losses whatever they be or can be, we mean as our Saviour doth, *even an hundred fold in this life, and in the world to come life everlasting*. Should you forsake the truth for fear of affliction, which God forbid, you might then peradventure for a time preserve your estates, and liberties, and lives, (and yet that may be a question too) but suppose the best, you should nevertheless have a very losing bargain of it in the end, and should shew your selves to be penny-wise therein and pound-foolish. For our Saviours words must stand, and all flesh shall finde them most infallibly true, that *he that shall save his life shall lose it, and he that shall lose his life for his sake and the Gospels, shall save it*. Many of you have been professors of the truth for these many

Mar. 10. 29, 30.

Mat. 8. 35.

years, it is fit therefore that by this time you ſhould be grown up to ſome good meaſure of heavenly-mindedneſſe, and living by faith even then when ſenſe and reaſon, and all creature-comforts ſhall fail. *Look not therefore on things that are*
2 Cor. 4. 18. *ſeen, but on things that are not ſeen, for the things that are ſeen are temporal, but the things that are not ſeen are eternal.* Learn now by faith to ſee him that is inviſible, and thereby to endure
Heb. 11. 27. all that may befall you, as *Moſes* ſometimes did by that means. *Buy the truth but ſell it not,* Rather ſell all that you have for the buying thereof:
Pro 23. 23. *for the merchandiſe thereof is better then ſilver, and the gain thereof, then fine gold.* The Doctrine of the Goſpel, and the grace of Chriſt therein is ſuch a treaſure and ſuch a pearl that he

he deals like a wiſe man that ſhall purchaſe the ſame, though with the loſſe or ſale of all that he hath. For Popery (we truſt) you ſo far do ſee the vanity and loathſomeneſſe thereof, that you will never decline nor turn aſide thereto: but take heed of Arminianiſm, Familiſm, and all other erroneous doctrines, of which theſe daies are ſo fruitfull: eſpecially take heed of the leaven of the Anabaptiſts: which (if we be not miſtaken) is ſo dangerous and pernicious, and yet withall ſo contagious, and apt to ſpread in theſe daies, that we ſcarce know any other, of which Chriſtians had ſo much need to take heed, and to be advertiſed and exhorted ſo to do. It is but too manifeſt that many of all ſorts are now a daies hankering and leaning that way, and it is therefore a Ver. 13. 46.

teſtimony of our love, and ſo we hope you will take it, that we adviſe you to beware leſt youalſo or any of you be plucked away with that or any other error, and fall from your own ſtedfaſtneſs. Love one another, and cleave together in firmneſs of Chriſtian and cordial affection. The enemies of the truth are not ſo weak, nor you ſo ſtrong, that there can be any need of your diſſentions and
2 Pet. 3. 17. diviſions for the weakning of your ſelves or the ſtrengthning of them. *Divide & impera*, Divide them and make your ſelves Maſters of them all, is one of *Machiavels* principles, and a moſt perillous one it is. It will be your wiſedom to take heed leſt the Jeſuites ſhould practiſe the ſame deſign amongſt you, whether among your military Commanders or otherwiſe, your

your ſafety and ſtrength under God doth in great part conſiſt in your unity and agreement among your ſelves; Beleeve the truth when it is held forth unto you either in books and private diſcourſe, or ſpecially in the publike Miniſtry, & *receive it in the love of it*, that you may not be deluded with lies. Content not your ſelvs with literal knowledg in the brain & head, but chiefly look after ſpirituality and ſincerity of heart, and manifeſt and ſhew forth the ſame by the power of godlineſſe in all your converſation. What upon ſober and ſerious conſideration you ſhall finde your ſelves ſhall have moſt need of another day, whether the day of death or the day of judgement, or any other day of deep diſtreſſe, of that (if you be wiſe) doe you chiefly make your choice now: 2 Theſſ. 11.

and

and what will be moſt uncomfortable then, do you now abandon; And to apply this generall, the day is coming and not far off neither, when the favour of God through Chriſt Jeſus, true intereſt to his ſpeciall love, as reconciled through the bloud of his ſon, with the amiable and ſweet light of his countenance, will be of more worth to the ſoul, and yield more ſatisfaction to the heart, then all that this world can afford, from the riſing of the Sunne to the going down thereof. Yea, the day is coming when theſe things will all be miſerable comforters and phyſitians of no value, but thoſe other will then be found to be of ſuch abſolute alſufficiency to the ſoul, as that he ſhall be moſt happy for ever that hath them, and of ſuch neceſſity that he ſhall be moſt wretched and accurſed

curſed that ſhall live and die without them. Wherefore we beſeech you, conſider wiſely what now you have to doe, and now with *Mary* make choice of the better part, which will never be taken from you. Chooſe the Lord God in Chriſt for your portion, and the lot of your inheritance; chooſe not any way of ſin, or errors, or creatures for your God, for they are no Gods: but now make a choice (and the Lord direct you ſo to doe) that you may have the comfort of the ſame hereafter, and for evermore.

We doe not think our ſelves to be the only Prophets, nor that we only are able to give a word of counſel or comfort to our countreymen: we truſt we are ſo far conſcious to our own weakneſſe, that ſuch arrogant apprehenſions are far from us.

Nor

Nor doe we doubt but *Lancaſhire* is bleſſed of God with many faithful and able Watchmen, who are continually blowing the trumpet in your ſtreets, and imparting the meſſage of the Lord amongſt you, much more ſuteably to your condition, then we at ſo many miles diſtance can poſſibly do, of whom we have no other thoughts but that the meaneſt of them might adde much unto either of us. But becauſe we dearly love our Countrey, though we live not in it, therefore we think it meet to ſeek the weal thereof in the beſt manner we are able, and we hope we may be allowed ſo to doe. We alſo conſider, that ſometimes the God of heaven may give as great a bleſſing to weaker means, as to thoſe that are more excellent and eminent, that ſo himſelf and not the

the means, may have all the glory. Finally, we are both of us well ſtricken in years, and poſting on apace towards our diſſolution, and never like to ſee your faces, nor you to ſee ours in this world, and therefore we are willing to doe this office of love unto your ſouls, conceiving it may be the laſt that we can do unto you in this kinde before we die: and glad we ſhould be if you may have the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and the things that concern your own peace in remembrance after our deceaſe. Upon theſe and ſuch like conſiderations we have adventured to do as here you ſee, hoping our ſincere and loving intentions will be accepted in good part. For which we deſire no other recompence at your hands, but the benefit of your praiers on our behalf, and this

we

we do moſt affectionately requeſt from you. Finally Brethren farewell: and the *God of*
1 Pet. 5. 10, 11. *all grace who hath called us to his eternal glory by Chriſt Jeſus, after that you have ſuffered a while, make you perfect, ſtabliſh ſtrengthen, ſettle you: to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever,* Amen. *Fear none of thoſe things*
Rev. 2. 10. *which poſſibly you may yet ſuffer, but be you faithful unto the death, and the Lord hath promiſed he will give unto you a Crown of life.* To his grace we commend you all in our beſt deſires, and ſo reſt,

Deſirous of your eternal

Dorcheſter in New England, the laſt of December, 1649.

comfort in Chriſt Jeſus,

RICHARD MATHER.

WILLIAM TOMPSON.

A POSTSCRIPT TO THE READER.

UNderſtand dear Friends and Countreymen, and any to whom this enſuing Letter may be preſented, that the Authours who writ the ſame, did intend it only as a ſmall Remembrance of that Chriſtian love that ought

ought to flow and abound in all that are members of that mistical body, according to that Heb. 3.13. so especially it ought to manifest it self betwixt Ministers and people; and though these Friends that now write are so distant that they cannot speak to those to whom they write, as sometime they have done, yet they cannot forget those bowels of love as here is expressed and once did more fully declare to be in them when they dwelt

dwelt among you; and though it come ſo late to your hands, the reaſon was, the place being ſo remote, and the way of conveyance ſo difficult, being it was intended to be Printed that ſo the more might enjoy it: The Preſſe at that time being full of other imployment (which was in the Year 1645.) it was caſt by ſo long, that at laſt the Authours thought it out of ſeaſon, and ſo ſent for it home again to N. E. till now this Year,

Year, ſome Friends understanding and seeing of it, encouraged the Authours to put it forth still; which they (willing to shew their love to their Countreymen) condeſcended unto: And therefore let it not seem to thee as an Almanack out of date, but well weigh and consider it, and what thou findeſt in it that concerns thee in any kinde, make use of it to the glory of God and thine own good, for that is it which the Authours

thours wiſh and deſire, as their preaching formerly, and Letters now expreſſe, that the Name of God may be glorified in you, and you in him.

* *
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FINIS.